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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1315  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1151  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 002339

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: PREVAL WELCOMES SENATOR DEWINE AND REPRESENTATIVE  
SCHAKOWSKY

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Classified By: Charge d'affaires Thomas C. Tighe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: President Rene Preval met with Senator DeWine (R-OH), Representative Schakowsky (D-IL) and the Ambassador at the National Palace November 29 in advance of a cocktail reception Preval held in honor of DeWine. Preval stressed that insecurity in Port-au-Prince is not due to political factors, but rather a result of banditry. The police need to gain the trust of the population so they will share their knowledge about the kidnappers; currently, victims and neighbors are too scared to tell the police what they know for fear of retaliation by rogue police officers. Preval explained the cumbersome process to amend the constitution, which would be necessary in order for naturalized Americans to retain Haitian citizenship. Senator DeWine said that the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership act (HOPE) is unlikely to pass this year but encouraged the president to travel to Washington early next year. The President's somber and even defensive mood when discussing insecurity likely reflects both the timing of the meeting (following over a week of an increase in violence) and pressure from the Haitian population for a GoH response to insecurity in Port-au-Prince. End Summary.

A New Wave of Insecurity  
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12. (C) Preval said that insecurity in Port-au-Prince is largely a result of the economic situation in the country. The worst way to view the situation is as a result of political factors; the other worst thing to do is doubt the will of his administration in the face of insecurity. He explained that there were two causes of insecurity in Port-au-Prince: the people close to Aristide and bandits. Now, only the bandits are left and they have resorted to kidnapping. He said this is a new wave of insecurity and that it is a question of who the gangs are and where they are, because "all it takes is one small gun and there are lots of them in Haiti."

¶3. (C) Preval addressed the wide-spread belief that the Haitian National Police (HNP) is involved with the kidnapping and said that the GoH is looking for links between the bandits and the police. The population must trust the police enough to share information about the kidnappers. He said that the number of HNP is not sufficient and that they do not have enough resources, although he acknowledged the motorcycles and radios that the U.S. gave to the HNP. Preval also said that the GoH had prioritized the local elections on December 3, which require already scarce security personnel from both the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (Minustah) and the HNP. He guaranteed that following the elections, both security forces will be focused on the insecurity. He also promised to convoke a forum of parliamentarians, politicians and members of the civil society to address the problem of insecurity.

#### Dual Citizenship for Haitian-Americans

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¶4. (U) On behalf of her Haitian constituents, Schakowsky asked Preval about the possibility for amending the constitution to allow for dual citizenship of Haitian Americans. Preval explained that amendment process is difficult. First one parliament has to propose the change and approve the proposal, and then the following parliament, under a newly-elected government, must approve the amendment. Preval's commission reviewing the constitution found that this process takes too long, but constitutionally, even the process itself would take about ten years to change.

#### HOPE Unlikely to Pass This Year

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¶5. (C) DeWine admitted that the HOPE bill is not likely to pass this year because Congress may be in session for only one week. In the event that it does not pass, DeWine advised

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Preval to go to Washington early next year. Preval thanked DeWine for his earlier advice that it would not be worthwhile for Preval to travel to Washington to lobby for the HOPE bill before the end of the year, and said that he is certain it will pass, thanks to friends like DeWine.

¶6. (C) Comment: This meeting occurred after one week of an increase in violence in Port-au-Prince. The somber, at times defensive attitude of the President likely reflects pressure from the situation and from previous conversations with his inner circle. The growing impatience of the population for a GoH response to insecurity also seemed to play a role, particularly in his comment that the worst thing to do is to doubt the will of his administration. End comment.

¶7. (U) Senator DeWine and Representative Schakowsky,s office have not cleared on this cable.  
TIGHE